

The so called ‘operation Kulak’ and its impact in the districts Chrudim and Hlinsko

Abstract

The submitted doctoral thesis analyses the problem of a violent phase of collectivization in Czechoslovakia in the 1950's, with a particular focus on the so called ‘Operation Kulak.’ In the first part, the author analyses the historical background of collectivization and therefore at first provides with significant milestones in the history of Czechoslovakia. He focuses mainly on the development after the Second World War, with a particular aim to inquire into the relation of land confiscation made on the ground of Czechoslovakian president's decrees.

Specific attention is also paid to the fundamental regulations, which are connected either with the agricultural production, land ownership, or with the violent phase of collectivization. Moreover, the author introduces ‘Operation Kulak’ nationwide. He gives a detailed description of the preparation of the most significant events linked to the above-mentioned operation, including pretexts for its implementation known as ‘Babice case’ (1951).

‘Operation Kulak’ was prepared in the highest ranks of the Czechoslovak Communist Party with an involvement of closest collaborators of Klement Gottwald. This operation was aimed against wealthy and medium sized farmers including their family members. It was based on a regulation issued jointly by the minister of National Security, Interior and Justice, sent to the respective state organs as a ‘secret order’ of the National Security Minister No. 27.

Between 1952 (October) and 1953 (December), this internal regulation touched lives of hundreds of families. Those family members of private farmers, selected beforehand, were simply persecuted in various ways. The Communist regime assessed that they were not only regime-opponents, but they were also highly perilous. The Communists banned them to stay in the particular district and ordered them to move to another district in order to work at the Czechoslovak state-owned farm.

The doctoral thesis is based on the author's archival research concerning the so called violent phase of collectivization in the districts of former Czechoslovakia- namely Chrudim and Hlinsko, both belonging to Pardubice Region. The author uses examples from the investigated areas and aims to analyse how the already mentioned regulation and its criminal and administrative amendments were applied.

This does not only explain the persecution of the private farmers themselves, the role of local administrative organs and the usage of legal implements during the violent phase

of collectivization, but even the secondary persecution directed towards the family members of the afflicted farmers. Even those, who have never been prosecuted, let alone convinced, have also been severely prosecuted through illegitimate regulations. This very fact symbolizes a weighty infringement of human rights, both the former and the current. It illustrates a completely wilful application of state power on the law and its fundamentals in our legal culture in the 1950s.

The thesis also deals with the development of ‘Operation Kulak’ in its relation to planned economic system. It scrutinizes how the development of above-mentioned operation relates to the founding, development and consolidation of agricultural cooperatives, with its mandatory supplies and their either compliance or noncompliance in relation to the land area of individual farmers. It is feasible to compare the outcomes with other regions. Furthermore, it is possible to either particularize, affirm or rebut certain already published ideas about the operation and its progress.

A thorough analysis of case studies represents another significant part of the thesis. The author aims to demonstrate the authentic development of ‘Operation Kulak’, inclusive of the problems related to its implementation in the broader context.

Keywords

Collectivization

‘Operation Kulak’

District Chrudim